**Critical and Creative Thinking Seminars**

**Desired Outcomes**

We expect the following elements to be common to all CCT seminars:

1. The seminars will require no previous knowledge of the discipline.
2. They will be reading, writing, and research-intensive courses on specific, fascinating topics in the discipline, rather than introductory survey courses.
3. They will give priority to process issues in the discipline (by which we mean the analytic and evaluative skills associated with the use of knowledge in the discipline), rather than coverage of a wide range of content.
4. They will introduce the students to a realistic experience of academic research and writing in these disciplines and would focus on the critical thinking skills utilized by experts in the discipline.

Based on these elements, we are teaching to following outcomes:

1. Ability to identify the basic elements of the discourse community for the discipline.

Knowledge is developed in disciplines through conversations between peers. These conversations proceed according to agreed upon conventions, which are learned during training in the discipline, during one’s college years. The conventions define what are appropriate subjects or areas of research within the discipline, what constitutes ‘legal’ evidence in support of a knowledge claim, and the appropriate technical vocabulary for the discipline. For some disciplines all experts agree upon these elements. For others, there may be competing factions within the discipline that have their own ideas about these elements.

2. Demonstration of basic analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills as practiced in the discipline (see rubric). These include:

1. the initial ability to *identify* the thesis/conclusion of an argument, to identify the reasons given in support of the thesis, and to identify the evidence included in these reasons.
2. With sufficient background, it will further include the ability to evaluate these elements.
3. By the end of the course it will include the ability to generate oral or written reports that includes appropriate organization of these elements.

3. Creative thinking: The ability to generate and evaluate alternative explanations or unique problem solutions for themes investigated in the course.

At the end of the course I’ll be asking you to fill-out the following survey:

**Check all the categories you feel the *majority* of students in your course mastered**:

\_\_\_Ability to distinguish the thesis of a reading from its topic

\_\_\_Ability to list the author's reasons that support the thesis

Evaluation abilities:

\_\_\_\_ability to locate formal or informal logical fallacies

\_\_\_\_ability to recognize incomplete or missing parts of an argument

\_\_\_\_ability to judge design and p value strengths of empirical evidence from research

\_\_\_\_ability to judge other discipline-specific evidence (what kind?)

\_\_\_\_other?

Creativity abilities

\_\_\_\_ability to generate alternative explanations for thesis

\_\_\_\_ability to generate creative solutions to problems

\_\_\_\_other?